



...**NEWS** at **11SN**...

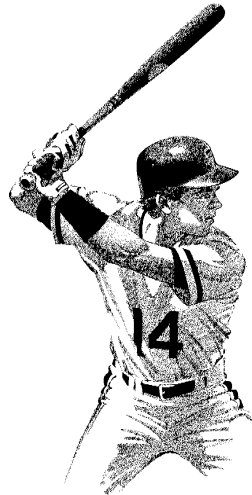
*A Quarterly Publication for VA Employees of VISN 11
This newsletter is also available on the VISN 11 HomePage*

VISN 11 "Stepping Up to the Plate"

Budgetary concerns are at the top of our priority list, and when asked how can we maximize dollars for VISN 11, employees from each facility have been "stepping up to the plate" to meet the challenge. The emphasis is on total revenue collections as a Network. Efforts within individual medical centers and together as Network teams clearly demonstrate that we have a winning revenue team!

Fiscal Year comparisons are most revealing. Through May 2001, VISN 11 revenue collections totaled \$22,434,157. Through May 2002, our revenue collections totaled \$35,558,768 (increase of 58.50 percent).

Notably, May 2001 collections were \$3,529,199 while May 2002 collections stand as an all-time winner at \$6,867,725 – an astronomical increase of 94.60 percent! Three medical centers exceeded \$1 million for May 2002 collections, with all-time records being established throughout VISN 11.



Employees are becoming project managers and working with other Network employees to maximize collections. These project managers and teams include billing, insurance identification, third party accounts receivable, first party accounts, prosthetics, coding, fee basis, preregistration, and technical support. Rather than voicing concerns about the budget situation we're facing, employees are coming together to become the solution. Knowing that every dollar collected remains at your facility, please support the revenue team as they continue to exceed new collection records!

Editorial Board

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News at 11 is published by VISN 11 for distribution to its employees and other interested stakeholders. Requests for further information on items to be covered or questions to be answered in future editions should be addressed to Edward Dornoff, 4646 John R., Detroit, MI, 48201.

Phase II Begins

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), including the Veterans in Partnership Network, are beginning Phase II of its national initiative to ensure its health care system meets the needs of veterans today and in the future. This initiative is part of VA's health care planning process called Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES).

"VA's goal is to direct our resources where they are most needed, and at the same time provide the best care possible to more veterans at more locations," said Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Leo S. Mackay, Jr. "We will work with veterans, VA employees, university affiliates, and local and national elected officials to ensure everyone's concerns are heard as we enhance the quality of veterans health care."

VA launched CARES to bring its aging health care system into the 21st century. VA's health care system was designed and built decades ago when inpatient care was the primary focus, with long admissions for diagnosis and treatment. With changes in geographic concentrations of veterans and new methods of medical treatment, VA's medical system was not providing care as efficiently as possible and medical services were not always easily accessible to some veterans.

During the next 14 months, VISN 11 and VA Central Office will collect data and facility information for planning initiatives that will provide the best care for veterans today and in the future. Throughout the process, veterans, academic affiliates, unions, and employees will be briefed. Stakeholder opinions will be solicited and become an important part of the decision process, as will be the preservation of special services, such as those provided our paralyzed veterans.

Once completed, an independent and member commission selected by the Secretary of VA will evaluate the draft National CARES Plan. Members of the commission, who will be chosen in the fall of 2002,

will include individuals with special knowledge or interest relating to VA health care, as well as representatives from the various stakeholders' groups.



Phase II of CARES will be directed by Frederick L. Malphurs, who was the VISN 2 Network Director for the upstate New York Network since October 1995. Malphurs will work with an independent actuarial contractor and VA staff to project veteran

populations, determine what kind of health care veterans need, and where it is best to provide that care. "Health care is no longer about bricks and mortar. Twenty-first-century health care is about access to local care, early detection and prevention, efficient use of new technologies and home health care," said Mackay. "CARES is about 21st-century health care."

News at 11 **Staff Moves**

Congratulations to Kim Byers and Dan Hendee who have accepted new positions/assignments within the VA Healthcare System. Byers has been appointed as National Rehabilitation Special Events Coordinator/Public Affairs for VA Central Office, remaining at the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System. Hendee has been detailed to the Saginaw VA Medical Center where he participates in the VA Executive Career Field Development Program. Their dedication and involvement on the editorial board of *News at 11* have been greatly appreciated by the Network office and VISN 11 health care facilities.

Filling their positions on *News at 11*'s editorial board are Edward Dornoff, Detroit VA Medical Center, and Todd Greenman, Battle Creek VA Medical Center. Welcome!

Clinical Corner

The Advanced Illness Coordinated Care (AICC) model is an inspiring program being utilized at the Illiana Health Care System and the Indianapolis VA Medical Center. The model integrates well with the current health care system and providers at these facilities, and is a promising response to veterans' end-of-life needs. This program is based on Dr. Daniel Tobin's communication model, which combines expanded disease management and case management approaches with quality mainstream medicine.



The AICC team is comprised of various health care professionals who volunteer their time to enhance the overall AICC goal of advanced illness/end-of-life care coordination, and the enrichment of veterans' personal control and self-efficacy. The AICC

volunteers receive education that develops the skills they need to help veterans cope more effectively with suffering, realize a higher quality of remaining life, and when possible, achieve peaceful dying. According to Dr. Tobin, AICC combines "an awareness of hospice sensitivity with medical psychology, palliative medicine, health system organizational planning, home care, nursing, social work, and spiritual services."

Principles guiding the AICC model include:

- Coordination and orchestration of care
- Educational input, guidance, and assistance with decision making in the last 18 months of life
- Keeping the physician-patient relationship at the center of the care
- Never advocating for aggressive or less aggressive care

Providing this type of quality and compassionate end-of-life care is a great service to our veterans.

Provider of Choice Award

The Margaret Epp Weber Provider of Choice Award, first instituted in February 1999, acknowledges "the actions, teams, or individuals who contributed significantly to the well-being of a patient or group of patients as demonstrated through individualized services and/or caring interactions." Congratulations to the following Margaret Epp Weber Provider of Choice Award recipients for 2002:

1st Place: Advanced Illness Coordinated Care Program, Illiana Health Care System

2nd Place: Home Based Primary Care Program, Indianapolis VA Medical Center

3rd Place: Home Based Primary Care Program, Battle Creek VA Medical Center



Illiana Health Care System staff with Linda Belton, Network Director (front row, third from the right)



L-R: Carla Anderson on behalf of Indianapolis HBPC staff with Linda Belton, Network Director



Battle Creek HBPC staff with Medical Center Director Alice Wood (third from left)

How to Protect Yourself from Needlestick Injuries

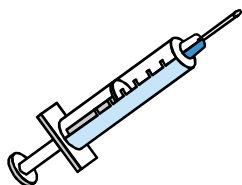
How common are needlestick injuries among health care workers? Estimates indicate that 600,000 to 800,000 needlestick injuries occur each year. Unfortunately, about half of these injuries are not reported.

All needlestick injuries should be reported to your supervisor immediately to ensure that you receive the appropriate medical attention and that appropriate accident forms (VA Form 2162 ASISTS) are completed and filed.

Who is at risk of needlestick injury? Any worker who may come in contact with needles is at risk, including nursing staff, lab workers, doctors, and housekeepers.

What kinds of needles usually cause needlestick injuries?

- Hypodermic needles
- Blood collection needles
- Suture needles
- Needles used in IV delivery system



What infections can be caused by needlestick injuries? Needlestick injuries can expose workers to a number of bloodborne pathogens that can cause serious or fatal infections. The pathogens that pose the most serious health risks are:

- Hepatitis B virus (HBV)
- Hepatitis C virus (HCV)
- Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) – the virus that causes AIDS

The HBV vaccination is recommended for all health care workers (unless they are immune because of previous exposure). HBV vaccine has proved highly effective in preventing infection in workers exposed to HBV. However, no vaccine exists to prevent HCV or HIV infection.

Do certain work practices increase the risk of needlestick injury? Yes. Past studies have shown that needlestick injuries are often associated with these activities:

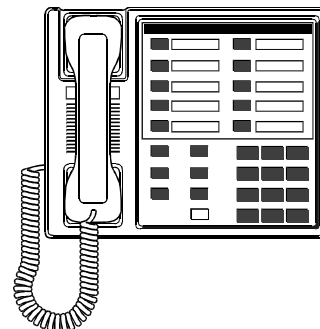
- Recapping needles
- Transferring a body fluid between containers
- Failing to dispose of used needles properly in puncture-resistant sharps containers

How can I protect myself from needlestick injuries?

- Avoid the use of needles where safe and effective alternatives are available
- Help your facility select and evaluate devices with safety features that reduce the risk of needlestick injury
- Use devices with safety features provided by your facility
- Avoid recapping needles
- Plan for safe handling and disposal of needles before using them
- Promptly dispose of used needles in appropriate sharps disposal containers
- Report all needlestick and sharps-related injuries promptly to ensure that you receive appropriate follow-up care
- Tell your facility about any needlestick hazard you observe
- Participate in infection prevention training
- Get a Hepatitis B vaccination

Contact your local VA Infection Control office or Safety office if you have any questions.

*Source: DHHS (NIOSH)
Publication No. 2000-135*



Rock and Roll in Cleveland

The Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center and the Buckeye Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) hosted the 22nd National Veterans Wheelchair Games, July 9-13, 2002. More than 550



veterans from across the United States, Puerto Rico, and Great Britain registered to compete in four full days of athletic events including track and field, weightlifting, basketball, swimming, and ten other competitions along with three special exhibitions. Fifty veterans from Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois were among those registered to compete.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi addressed the athletes at the Opening Ceremonies July 9, with Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Leo S. Mackay, Jr., offering remarks at the Games Closing the final day. Other special guests included all three Under Secretaries, Mayor of Cleveland Jane Campbell, Honorary Chairwoman of VA National Rehabilitation Events Bo Derek; local political and sports figures.

One regular competitor, Alan Armitage, a 50-year-old Army veteran from Belleville, Michigan, summed his feelings about the event, presented annually by VA and PVA. "There is nothing better than this event," Armitage said. "The National Veterans Wheelchair Games have made me a better person. By participating in the Games, I have met people from all over the world. When you leave the Games, you bring home such a feeling of accomplishment."

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games provide an opportunity for America's disabled veterans to better their health through rigorous sports competition. It is the largest annual wheelchair sports event of its kind in the world. To learn more, visit the Games web site at www.wheelchairgames.org.

Cancer Programs

Three VISN 11 medical centers have been endorsed as an Approved Teaching Hospital Cancer Program by the American College of Surgeons, Commission on Cancer: VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System, Detroit VA Medical Center, and the Indianapolis VA Medical Center. This honor is given to facilities that have voluntarily committed to provide the best in diagnosis and treatment of cancer, and to undergo a rigorous evaluation process and review of its performance.

Receiving care at an approved cancer program ensures a patient will have access to:

- Quality care
- Comprehensive care offering a range of state-of-the-art services and equipment
- A multi-specialty team approach to coordinate the best treatment options available to cancer patients
- Information about cancer clinical trials, education, and support
- Lifelong patient follow-up through a cancer (tumor) registry that collects data on type and state of cancer and treatment results
- Ongoing monitoring and improvement of care



There are approximately 1,500 Commission on Cancer Approved Cancer Programs in the United States and Puerto Rico, representing close to 25 percent of all hospitals. More than 80 percent of patients who are newly diagnosed with cancer are treated in these facilities.



VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System

■ **Mary Connors**, N.P., surgery service, was selected Nurse Practitioner of the Year 2002 by the Michigan Council of Nurse Practitioners.

■ **Helen Kales**, M.D., Ph.D., HSR&D, was honored as one of two recipients of a two-year \$130,000 Pfizer/American Geriatrics Society Foundation Award “Health in Aging Postdoctoral Fellowship for Research on Health Outcomes” in geriatrics. Dr. Kales’ project addresses the impact of race on physician diagnosis of depression in the elderly.

■ During Ann Arbor’s recent Volunteer Recognition Dinner, **Beverly Leneski**, volunteer coordinator, was named recipient of the 5th Annual Lee Weatherbee Memorial Award, VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System’s highest individual honor. The Weatherbee Award, named for Ann Arbor’s former chief of pathology & laboratory medicine service, recognizes one individual staff member who demonstrates, as did Dr. Weatherbee, that which makes us human, a sense of integrity, humor, and caring; an individual who treats each and every person with friendship, dignity, and respect.



Battle Creek VAMC

■ The Homeless Veterans Focus Group, comprised of Battle Creek VA volunteers, won the *USA Weekend* magazine’s local award for their participation in the national *Make A Difference Day* project. The group raised \$11,661 to purchase 14 dressers and beds for three “Jesse Houses” in Battle Creek for homeless veterans. The homes are a collaborative effort of the medical center, City of Battle Creek, and the Battle Creek Housing Commission. The focus group also received

the Doris Laimbeer Group Award from the Volunteer Center of Battle Creek at its National Volunteer Week Awards Program in April.

■ The medical center’s employee volunteer program, *Getting to Know You*, received the Sharon J. Olson Memorial Character Award from Character Unlimited and the Family Y Center of Battle Creek at its Character Week Awards Program in May. Over 80 employees have volunteered 549 hours since 2000 at the Battle Creek World’s Longest Breakfast Table and Festival of Lights, Salvation Army’s Soup Kitchen, and North Pointe Woods, a senior living community.

■ The medical center received a three-year accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) for its Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) program and Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) program. The CWT program includes therapeutic residences located within the community, and the HCHV program provides a continuum of care for veterans needing supportive housing and employment following discharge. The award recognizes the medical center for demonstrating compliance with the standards set by CARF.

VA Illiana Health Care System, Danville

■ The VA Illiana Health Care System hosted an afternoon of tours and discussions for the 2002 Summer Educator Academy, enabling local educators to receive a better understanding of today’s skills needed to prepare youth for future careers.

■ During 2002 National Hospital and Health Care Week, a variety of events were held, such as open houses highlighting the medical center’s renovated clinics in Ambulatory Care and Rehab Medicine and the new community based outpatient clinic in Springfield, Ill. A picnic was held for all three shifts at the medical center, and the CBOCs had food-related parties during the week. An arts, crafts, hobbies, and collectibles display gave employees the chance to show off their work and collections. Softball, basketball, volleyball, bowling, and golfing events were also held. The celebration concluded with a health care fun day that provided health care

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delivery information in a fun format. This was a great opportunity for employees, retired employees, and volunteers to socialize, reenergize, but most of all just have fun!

■ In the spirit of patriotism and in recognition of veterans, May 27-31 was designated Patriotic Week. Various events and activities were scheduled during the week. Memorial Day Services, sponsored by the Joint Veterans Council, were held at the Danville National Cemetery and services were held at the VA chapel. The Avenue of Flags, featuring state flags, was also displayed along the main drive of the medical center. A "Wall of Fame" displayed photos of employees' family members currently serving in the military. Flag pins were distributed to all employees, and flyers with flag information were sent out electronically. Services within the medical center participated in a "Decorate Your Work Area" contest to creatively show their patriotism. Gifts were also handed out hourly to randomly selected employees and everyone was invited to wear red, white, and blue on May 31. Patriotic Week may have concluded with red, white, and blue attire, but the spirit of patriotism is long lasting.

John D. Dingell VAMC, Detroit

■ The Detroit VA Medical Center held a ceremony to honor seven Boy Scouts who earned the Eagle rank by



Eagle Scouts of Troop 47

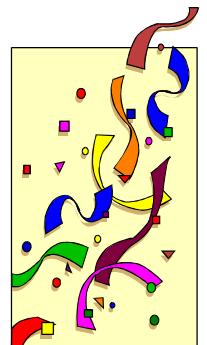
completing a hypertension education and screening community service project under the supervision of the Detroit VA Cardiac Health and Hypertension Research

Education and Screening Team (CHHREST). The ceremony was held in conjunction with National High Blood Pressure Month. The scouts received awards from the Mayor, the Detroit City Council, Ford Motor Company, their Michigan State Representative, U.S. Congresswoman Carolyn Cheeks-Kilpatrick, and the Detroit VA Medical Center. Thanks to VA medical center volunteers, Eagle Scouts of Troop 47 have learned the importance and value of community service.

CHHREST is a team of VA employees, mostly clinicians, who regularly volunteer in the community to do blood pressure screenings and hypertension education. They reach out to churches and community centers and staff the City of Detroit's annual Walking for Wellness Program and Blood Pressure Sunday.

Richard L. Roudebush VAMC, Indianapolis

■ Congratulations to the Indianapolis VA Medical Center for the following accreditations: Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities' three-year accreditation for the Homeless Veterans Program's Case Management Services and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program's Employee Development Services; and Commission on Laboratory Accreditation of the College of American Pathologists Accreditation for Medical Laboratory.



■ **Lula Atkins**, nutrition and food service, was recognized as the 2002 Federal Employee Association's Employee of the Year for the trades category. The awards luncheon was held at the Murat Centre in Indianapolis.

■ On June 12, the medical center hosted its annual All Employee and Volunteer Appreciation Picnic. Plenty of hamburgers, chips, sodas, and ice cream sandwiches were served to all three shifts.

■ **Carla Anderson**, M.S.N, R.N., was awarded the Clinical Excellence Award by the Indiana University School of Nursing Alumni Association. This award is presented to an IU alumna who has made significant contributions to the clinical practice of nursing.

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Aleda E. Lutz VAMC, Saginaw

■ On Flag Day, June 14, the Saginaw VA Medical Center hosted 41 World War II veterans, their families, and the Saginaw Board of Education in a high school graduation ceremony. In recent legislation, the State of Michigan granted WWII veterans who left high school to enlist in the military, honorary high school diplomas. The ceremony held at the medical center recognized these veterans with a special graduation for their lifetime achievements.



■ The Saginaw Senior Sportsters held local intramural games in preparation of the National Golden Age Games. The recreation section sponsored the 5th Annual Saginaw Intramural Games for patients in the interim care facility. The games consisted of basketball, horseshoes, darts, checkers, pool, and shuffleboard. This year the Military Order of the Purple Heart and Auxiliary supported the games along with 45 students from Jefferson Middle School. The students were so impressed while working with the veterans they vowed to return next year.

■ On May 30, the medical center's annual Memorial Day Program was held in the chapel. The program allowed family members, staff, and volunteers to remember those veterans who passed away last year in the medical center. The VAVS Committee presented red carnations in memory of each veteran.

VA Northern Indiana Health Care System

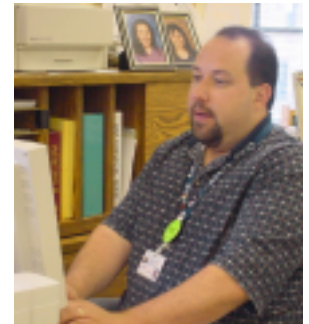
■ VA Northern Indiana Health Care System held Public Service Recognition Ceremonies at the Marion Campus on May 9 and at the Ft. Wayne Campus on May 10. Honored at the ceremony were Hands and Heart Awards recipients **Carol Hayden** and **Michael Hornbaker**, and VA's Unsung Hero/Heroine Awards recipients **Pat Baker** and **Jenny Kazmarik**.

■ Chaplain service hosted a Mid-Day Prayer Luncheon and fellowship in conjunction with the National Day of Prayer on May 23. Grant County Sheriff Oatess E. Archey was the guest speaker. Sheriff Archey, a former FBI agent, spoke on terrorism.

■ **Brenda Shelton**, nutrition and food service, was recognized for her fast action in assisting a missing veteran patient she saw standing by the roadside. Leaving from work, Shelton saw a bleeding man and stopped to assist. She put the veteran in her car and returned to the medical center's triage area. Shelton's quick action got the patient back for the care he required and prevented any additional harm.

VISN 11 Network Office, Ann Arbor

■ Congratulations to **Tye Auter** who was selected VISN 11 Decision Support System (DSS) Employee of the Year. Auter is the DSS program analyst at the Illiana Health Care System. As a team, the VISN 11 DSS staff developed the automated processing grid a few years ago. The grid is utilized across the country by many DSS staff. It eases monthly DSS processing and assists in training new DSS site team members throughout the VA. Auter has been very instrumental in the development and maintenance of the automated DSS monthly processing grid. Each year, he updates the grid with all mandatory changes to the processing steps and also adds features to make the tool even more useful.



Auter

■ Congratulations to the following employees who have been selected for the VA Executive Career Field Development Program:

- **Dan Hendee**
Saginaw VA Medical Center
- **Denise Deitzen**, M.S.N., R.N.
Battle Creek VA Medical Center
- **Calvin Marshall**
Battle Creek VA Medical Center
- **Prem Prasad**, M.D.
Battle Creek VA Medical Center